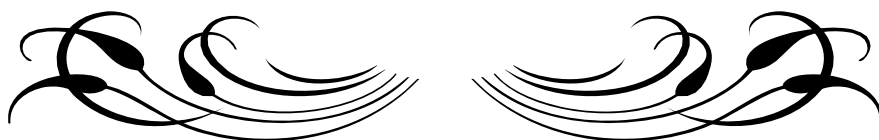


Total Physical Response: A Strategy for Beginning ELLs

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TOTAL PHYSICAL RESPONSE FOR NEWCOMERS

Total Physical Response (TPR) was developed by James Asher (1982) *Learning another language through actions: The complete teachers' guidebook*.

The method was designed primarily for students in the early stages of language acquisition. Since commands can be made comprehensible to students with very limited language, Asher used commands as the basis for TPR. The teacher or a more proficient student gives a command, demonstrates the command, and then students respond physically to the command. Because students are actively involved and not expected to repeat the command, anxiety is low, and student focus is on comprehension rather than production. Hence, they demonstrate comprehension before their speaking skills emerge.

After an introduction to key vocabulary, students watch a demonstration of the command and then follow the command. For example, "paper (*teacher shows a stack of paper*) a piece of paper (*teacher holds up one piece*), take out (*teacher does action with different objects*) Take out a piece of paper." New vocabulary is introduced and previous vocabulary reviewed in a series of related commands. New commands are added until students can respond to variations of several. Summary of the steps follows:

1. Students watch demonstration of key words and then a command using them.
2. Students listen again and watch as the teacher performs the action.
3. The teacher gives the command and models the action again, this time having students perform the actions simultaneously.
4. The teacher gives the command to the group without modeling the action.
5. The teacher gives the command to an individual without modeling the action.
6. The teacher models variations & combinations for the groups.
7. Students perform variations & combinations.
8. If some students are ready, they give commands to classmates.

TPR is a well-known beginning ESL method, but TPR-based activities can be adapted and incorporated into mainstream or multi-level classes, particularly in areas where visible directions can be given. It is very helpful to ESL students when mainstream teachers incorporate TPR into their instruction. This is particularly easy to do in physical education, art, and other classes where directions are commonly used for visual acts. Even in science and math students can gain a great deal of comprehensible input through the use of TPR. For example, any science experiment can be an opportunity to involve beginners through TPR. TPR also provides a base for literacy development in the second language as students learn to read the commands they followed.

Adapted by Jeanette Gordon, Illinois Resource Center

CHOOSING THE INSTRUCTIONAL FOCUS FOR TPR

It is critical, as for all instruction, that the content chosen for any TPR lesson help students meet authentic needs. The examples listed reflect functional classroom instructions and begin to also introduce the language for math since ESL students can profit from some math instruction even with very limited English skills. Too often, the commands many published TPR lessons suggest do not provide the language that is most needed by new ESL learners. Commands such as: "Sneeze, giggle, wet your lips,

scratch your nose”, and so forth are fun but don’t include vocabulary, content, nor classroom directions that are particularly useful to an ESL student.

Fun commands, however, can be incorporated which use functional and purposeful vocabulary such as, “Write the answer on your hand.” “Write”, “answer”, and “hand” are useful for many classroom directions. “*Thumbs up*” and “*high five*” used in the sample that follows may not be high frequency words in English, but they help establish a positive and supportive classroom environment that is critical for reducing anxiety and helping students develop a sense of camaraderie. Outside of the ESL classroom, these supportive signs may also be one of the first ways an ESL student will try to communicate with a native speaker, and these gestures typically evoke a positive response.

Following are samples of commands that would review and expand upon classroom procedures and introduce content language for a math class. The students easily understand the math in this sample and are learning the language for what they already know. TPR can also be used to teach new content. The teacher would continue to use TPR and the math vocabulary introduced in this sample to teach new concepts. However, whenever the concepts are new, they would be introduced first with math manipulatives prior to using numbers.

In a TPR activity, only about 7 of the words are new. It is important to review and build upon the vocabulary learned previously. The new words are highlighted. In this sample ESL students are working in teams of 4 as they follow the commands.

- Take out a piece of paper.
- Pick up your pen.
- Write your name on your paper in the upper-right-hand corner.
- Write and **add** $2 + 4 = \underline{\quad}$
- Raise your hand.
- Number 2s stand. Show us the answer with your fingers.
- Copy the **problem** $2 + 13 = \underline{\quad}$.
- **Solve** the **problem**.
- **Check** the problem of the person next to you.
- Copy this **addition problem**.

$$\begin{array}{r} 25 \\ + 9 \\ \hline = \underline{\quad} \end{array}$$

- First, **add** the numbers on the right.
- Write a 4 under the 9.
- Write the 1 above the 2.
- Add 1 and 2. Write 3 on the line in front of the 4.
- Count the numbers in the **problem**.
- Count the **digits** in each number.
- Look at the **addition problems** on the board.
- Number 3s, go to the board and **solve** one **problem**.
- Students, **check** the answers.
- 4s, congratulate your teammate. Give your teammate a “high-five.”
- Everyone write one **addition problem** on your paper. Use only 2 numbers in your problem. Use 1 or 2 digits in your numbers. Pass the paper to the right.

- **Solve the problem.** Pass the paper to the right.
- Check the answer. Put your “thumbs up” if the answers are correct.

As students follow the commands, they are not asked to repeat. This reduces anxiety and enables attention to be focused on comprehension. Soon, however, several students will begin to repeat words, phrases or sentences. As soon as some are comfortable saying the commands, they may begin giving similar directions to other students. The activities that preceded this one would have included fewer commands, shorter commands and more limited vocabulary. When review is carefully incorporated into a sequence of TPR activities, complexity can increase quickly. Without this type of review, progress is very slow, and student retention is dramatically reduced.

LITERACY WITH TPR FOR NEWCOMERS

Once students can follow oral commands, this comprehensible and meaningful vocabulary and context can be used to teach literacy. **One of the easiest things for a person to read is a simple command s/he just performed.** . Since literacy readiness in a second language will be determined primarily by literacy skills in the first language, there will be a wide range of performance in class even among the students with no prior English instruction. For a period of time (unique to each student) those who are illiterate may not be able to demonstrate many of the independent literacy skills in the sequence of suggested activities that follows; however, students with lower skills are still being exposed to key concepts and principles related to literacy.

The following sequence is a suggestion for an ESL instructor or aide; however, mainstream teachers would be able to replicate some of the activities with their ESL students. Often mainstream students can assist in providing the commands and in writing them for ESL learners. For example, as mainstream students learn TPR strategies, more proficient students can give the commands, model them, and write the commands on 3 by 5 cards. The ESL student then draws an accompanying picture of the action on the back.

POSSIBLE SEQUENCE OF LITERACY ACTIVITIES

1. The instructor shares the written form of some of the new vocabulary. Students demonstrate understanding of each, copy the words in the vocabulary section of their binders, and illustrate each word in a way that is meaningful to them. Literate students may add a native language translation.
2. Given a written list of the new commands from an oral activity, students follow along as the instructor reads them. A classmate will act out each command to insure comprehension. In TPR it is very beneficial to use a camera to record student action. Students take turns taking pictures of classmates demonstrating each command. After the modeling, students read along with the instructor and then with each other. They collaborate to illustrate the commands for later use. It is easy now with electronic cameras for students to create their own sequences of pictures with related commands.
3. Following review, student pairs will use a set of commands on sentence strips and take turns reading and acting out the commands. They will then match the sentences with their own illustrations and sequence the commands in a logical manner.
4. Given some beginnings of sentences and the endings of others, students will collaborate with a partner who has the missing endings and beginnings to

combine the sentences. When finished they can sequence the combined sentences.

5. Given a fill-in-the blank activity made from a meaningful sequence of commands, students will write in possible vocabulary. Some students may need a word bank.
6. Students who are ready will write commands dictated by the instructor. Others will attempt to fill in the blanks in sentences as they are dictated. Since students are at a very beginning level of English, one idea is to have them assess themselves by first identifying anything they did **correctly**, rather than looking for errors. They can underline their successes (an initial consonant, a single word spelled correctly, a capital letter or a period, the correct number of words, anything). They can then expand on this correctness by adding to and/or changing words and punctuation.
7. Students may then be ready to write their own sentences or sequences and combine the vocabulary in original ways. They can illustrate their sentences and have classmates match the drawings with the sentences. The students can also create fill-in-the-blank activities for other students.
8. Authenticity and purpose is enhanced if students develop a class project. They can collaborate with their teammates to write a meaningful sequence for a class book. Students can list the sequences studied in class and each team can choose one. They use copies of the pictures taken of students and write a series of directions to accompany the selected pictures. The following are sample titles: "Directions for Opening a Locker", "Being Prepared for Class", "Useful Directions For Class and Group Work", "Ways to Encourage and Respect Others", "Procedures in the Cafeteria" "Common Commands in Physical Education", "Reporting an Emergency", "Checking Out Library Books", and so forth.
9. As students learn more English, they can add entries to the book. For example, students describe what a student, or group of students "is/are doing" in related pictures. They might write about what one student "does every day" to prepare for class, and so forth. Students will also begin writing dialogues that are relevant to the situations pictured. The class continues to add to this book throughout the year with pictures of themselves and the accompanying text as they study other school situations. Gradually more school content directions are included such as the directions for a science experiment or directions for using a computer.
10. Students can role-play and tape or video-tape responses to a series of commands and dialogues related to different situations. They can provide a written text to accompany the tapes and videos. Native English speakers (peer tutors or volunteers) can assist in insuring accuracy and comprehensibility of the products.

The class book is a friendly way for students with low literacy skills to identify with literacy, to review and experience peer modeling, and to demonstrate personal skills at the point of readiness. At early stages an illiterate student may be copying comprehensible words or sentences written by a classmate and practicing letter formation and movement from left to right before copying a sentence into the book. Yet from the beginning, his/her contributions are part of the class project, and photographs of the student and/or drawings done by the student are always included.

For all learners, reading and writing instruction will immediately focus on purposeful activities. Even at beginning stages, in addition to personal relevance, student projects

will incorporate writing that benefits others. For example, the class books, as well as the videos and tapes with their accompanying text will be a valuable resource for other students who enter the school later in the year as well as for new students the following year. Many students have access to videos in learning centers and in their homes. Watching videos of themselves and other classmates is very pleasant homework for a beginning ESL student. Students are often anxious to share this type of homework assignment with their parents. Many native speakers enjoy participating in producing these videos to provide appropriate modeling for some of the commands, to help incorporate authentic interaction, and to edit the accompanying text.

TPR IN LARGE OR MULTILEVEL CLASSES

COOPERATIVE SUGGESTION: It is often beneficial for students to participate in TPR activities within groups of four. If there are not enough manipulatives for each student to have his/her own, the teacher can give directions to a designated person in a group. It is not as beneficial in a large class to have only one student do an activity that the rest of the class watches. Even for commands such as: "Walk to the door," or "Write on the blackboard" can be directed to "Number 3, walk to the door." Otherwise in a large class, students have to wait too long for their turn. (See sample TPR activities.)

MULTILEVEL SUGGESTIONS: In a multilevel classroom, the more advanced students will not respond to the TPR commands since the activity would be too low level for them. However, it is important to remember that they will be distracted by the physical activity in the room unless they themselves are involved in an engaging activity. One idea is for these students to use the oral activity as dictation practice. They may write the commands on the board as they are given and peer edit their work. Because they are written on the board, it is easy for the teacher to check them. An alternative would be to write a description of what a student "is doing". The teacher may ask one of the more advanced students to give the commands to the beginners while s/he checks the written work. It is helpful if the teacher first identifies the sentences with errors and the students collaborate to find and correct them. For errors students are unable to find, the teacher indicates where the error occurs in the sentence, and the students try again. Thus, the teacher corrects only those errors that the students cannot correct themselves. Once the sentences have been edited, the more advanced students can take turns reading the commands as the beginning students follow along or read them and then perform the action.

Another idea is for the more advanced students to answer more complex questions. For example, if a teacher incorporates TPR into a science experiment, all students follow the TPR directions for conducting the experiment. Students with some language skills are asked to describe what students are doing as they do the steps of the experiment and answer simple questions. The students with the most English language proficiency answer more complex questions and explain why they are doing what they are doing. For example, they may explain the rationale for the hypothesis, describe the controls and variables in the experiment, and explain the results.

Prepared by Jeanette Gordon, Illinois Resource Center

TPR Sample- Communities

POPULATION

2nd- 3rd grade ESL students, 2 new arrivals, most with about 3 months in the country

Stages of English Language Proficiency: entering, beginning, and developing

PURPOSE OF THE ACTIVITY

To introduce ESL students to vocabulary related to Illinois State Goals of Science #12. And Social Science, Goal 15. Theme: **Communities**

Big idea: **Community members work together to grow, produce, process, and prepare food.**

Essential concept: **Interdependence**

To review and reinforce vocabulary from previous activities on **Plants, Food, Consumers and Producers**

VOCABULARY (New vocabulary in bold)

NOUNS

animal	hen	cat	dog	plant
seed	water	wheat	mill	flour
dough	oven	table	water	wheelbarrow

VERBS

help	make	cook	take	move
put	eat	plant	grow	water
cut	grind	push	touch	mix
pay	buy	money		

IDIOMS: "put in" "take out" "take off"

PREPOSITIONS

next to	in	on	to	out
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EXPRESSIONS

thank you	please	set the table
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MANIPULATIVES AND VISUALS

sequential picture books about planting, growing, harvesting, and processing wheat and making bread:

What Goes Into Bread, How Bread is Made, Wheat, Different Kinds of Bread (Sunshine Books Science, The Wright Group) *Wheat* (Social Studies Emergent Readers, Scholastic) *Bread, Bread, Bread*, by Ann Morris, *The Loaf of Bread, See How It's Made*, Modern Curriculum Press

real seeds, real wheat, real flour (samples for each team)

Picture set for each team:

each animal in the story of *The Little Red Hen*,
table, stove with oven, wheat, wheelbarrow,
bag of flour, mill,

SAMPLE COMMANDS (Imitate actions with visuals.)

1. Number 1, put the hen next to the dog.
2. Number 2, put the duck next to the cat.
3. Number 3, take the dog. You are the dog.
4. Number 4, take the cat. You are the cat.
5. Number 2, take the duck. You are the duck.
6. Number 1, take the hen. You are the hen.
7. Dog, put the seed on the table.
8. Hen, take out the money. Buy the seed.
9. Cat, plant the seed.
10. Duck, water the **wheat**.
11. Everyone grow from a seed to **wheat**.
12. Everyone touch the **wheat**.
13. Hen, cut the **wheat**.
14. Cat, put the **wheat** in the **wheelbarrow**.
15. Dog, push the **wheat** to the **mill**.
16. Duck put the **wheat** in the **mill**.
17. Cat, touch the **mill**.
18. Hen, touch the **mill**.
19. Everyone **grind** the **wheat**. **Grind, grind, grind, grind** the **wheat**.
20. Dog pay the man in the **mill**.
21. Cat, take the **wheat** out of the **mill**.
22. Hen, put the **flour** in the **wheelbarrow**.
23. Duck, push the **flour** to the cat.
24. Cat, put the **flour** on the table.
25. Everyone touch the **flour**.
26. Hen, put water in the **flour** and make the **dough**.
27. Cat, help **mix** the **dough**.
28. Everyone help **mix** the dough. **Mix, mix, mix**, the **dough**.
29. Hen, make the bread.
30. Cat, put the bread in the oven.
31. Duck, please help set the table.
32. Dog, take the bread out of the oven.
33. Hen, put the bread on the table.
34. Cat, cut the bread.
35. Everyone, eat the bread.

PROCEDURE

1. Students look through the content-related sequential picture books prior to beginning the TPR activity. As students look through the pictures, they talk with each other in their home languages. Students who do not have a classmate who speaks his/her language sit with the teacher and listen as s/he talks through some of the pictures.
2. Teacher models as needed. Teams of students (4 per team, numbered 1-4) each have a set of pictures and collaborate with each other to physically follow the commands.
3. Students do not need to repeat. However, some students may choose to repeat, and more advanced students may give some of the commands.

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER CURRICULUM

Related TPR activities that preceded this one:

- Planting seeds and doing plant needs experiments
- Activities that previewed reading big books about planting and caring for plants: *Just One Seed*, *Food From Plants: Concept Science*, *The Goat in the Chile Patch*
- Activities related to buying, preparing and serving food: going to the store, setting the table, making a vegetable salad, eating a meal, cleaning up
- Activities that previewed the big book *Vegetable Soup*.

Follow up activities:

- “Read Aloud” the TPR commands. (*Teacher or student teams choral read, students read if ready.*)
- Listen to *The Little Red Hen* and read along if ready.
- Listen to or read descriptions of sequential actions that reflect the sequence of growing wheat, processing wheat, making and eating bread. Match descriptions with the pictures.
- Other TPR activities:
 - Make puppets for *The Little Red Hen*, role-play and participate as able during re-telling. “Read Aloud” the directions for making the puppets.
 - Make Chapatis, an Indian bread similar to tortillas, “Read Aloud” directions. *How Bread is Made* (Sunshine Books Science, The Wright Group)
 - If not ready to read yet in English, sequence pictures of the process for making Chapatis.
 - If ready to read, match directions with the picture sequence.
- Classification activities
 - Sequence pictures showing **process from wheat seed to bread**.
 - Classify pictures of different kinds of bread in several different ways.
 - Classify vocabulary as either related to wheat and bread or not related.
 - Do additional classification for bread and wheat vocabulary in many different ways.
 - Classify pictures into two groups, wheat products or not wheat products.
 - Classify pictures as grain products or not grain products.
- Collaborate with others on a poster showing the **products** of one grain.
- Collaborate on a mural showing the process from the wheat seed to bread in a **traditional culture** and a **modern culture**. Include as many labels as possible. **Identify where money is needed**.
- Collaborate with the class on a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting the traditional and technological methods.
- Continue **producers and consumers**, emphasis on math activities related to producing, processing, selling and buying food.

Prepared by Jeanette Gordon, Illinois Resource Center

TPR Sample Lesson-Conservation

Prepared By Deborah Both (with permission for use by the Illinois Resource Center to share with teachers as a sample)

Population (Grade/s and levels of ESL) 1st and 2nd grade native language Spanish students in bilingual classroom. Stages of English Language Proficiency: entering, beginning, and developing

Purpose of the activity To introduce students to English vocabulary related to Illinois State Goal Science # 13 B. 1c and District 54 Environmental Awareness Program/Nature Center field trip.

Theme: Conservation

Big idea: Human behavior affects the earth and our natural resources.

Essential concepts: Reduce, reuse and recycle.

Vocabulary (new vocabulary in bold)

Nouns

airplane	fork	milk
bin	garbage	mother
boy	girl	paper
flowers	jar	table
father	jug	plastic
glass		

Verbs

count	point	put	reuse
drink	read	take	recycle
look	wash	pick (up)	reduce

Manipulatives and visuals

Where does the trash go? SD#54 Science Unit

We take care of the Earth

The Earth and I Frank Asch

Pictures of garbage dumps, trucks, and landfills

Concrete items for each team:

plastic fork, glass jar, plastic jug, one sheet newspaper, garbage can, blue recycle bin

Picture set for each team:

boy, girl, mother, father, flowers

Sample commands

1. Number 2 take the girl. You are the girl.
2. Number 2 take the boy. You are the boy.
3. Number 3 take the mother. You are the mother.
4. Number 4 take the father. You are the father.
5. Boy, pick up the **plastic** fork.
6. Girl, wash the **glass** jar.
7. Mother, drink all the milk from the **plastic jug**.
8. Father, read the paper.
9. Boy, put the **plastic** fork in the garbage.
10. Girl, put the **glass jar** in the garbage.

11. Mother, put the plastic fork in the garbage.
12. Father, put the paper in the garbage.
13. Everyone, look at the garbage.
14. Everyone, count the things in the garbage. (one, two, three, four)
15. Everyone, look at the **recycle bin**.
16. Everyone, count the things in the **recycle bin**. (zero)
17. Boy, **reduce** the garbage. Take out the **plastic** fork and wash it.
18. Girl, **reduce** the garbage. Take out the **glass jar** and give it to the mother.
19. Mother, **reduce** the garbage. Take out the **plastic jug** and wash it.
20. Father, **reduce** the garbage. Take out the paper and make a paper airplane.
21. Boy, **recycle** the spoon and put it back on the table.
22. Girl, **reuse** the glass jar and put flowers in it.
23. Mother, **recycle** the **plastic jug** and put it in the **bin**.
24. Father, give the paper airplane to the boy.
25. Everyone, look at the garbage.
26. Everyone, count the things in the garbage. (zero)
27. Everyone, look at the **recycle bin**.
28. Everyone, count the things in the **recycle bin**. (one)
29. Girl, point to the **plastic jug** we **recycled**.
30. Boy, point to the **plastic** fork we will **reuse**.
31. Mother, point to the **glass jar** we **reused**.
32. Father, point to the paper we **reused**.
33. Everyone, point to the garbage we **reduced**.

Connection to other curriculum

Related TPR activities that preceded this one:

Used TPR to preview the poem, "Dirt made my lunch". The Hampton Brown poster and sing-along from *Into English* connects earth, soil, and dirt to animals, plants and things we eat.

Rocks to soil TPR activity to modify a SD #54 Science activity

Used TPR to preview the poem "The Sandwich"- The Hampton Brown poster and chant from *Into English* connects food with plants and shows examples of glass and plastic

Discussed community workers/garbage collectors

Follow up activities:

Use district 54 resource material: "What is a landfill?" "Ways you can reuse and recycle" "What's in the trash?"

Read *Just a Dream* by Chris Van Allsburg, and *The Lorax* by Dr. Seuss

Rally table-recycling vocabulary and pictures

Classify pictures of object in different ways:

Things I recycle, things I don't,

Things we already recycle in the classroom/home,

and what we could also recycle

Collaborate on Venn diagram-items that are plastic, glass, or both

Sort and prioritize pictures/vocabulary-things we should recycle

Make recycle bins, write and read-aloud the directions.

Make classroom posters about why we recycle.